

Diagnosing a Patient: Does It Hurt or Help?

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A disease is a condition that affects the body of an organism in an abnormal way. In human beings, it may be described as a phenomena that causes dysfunction, social problems, stress, or even death to a patient. Diseases can affect individuals emotionally, not just physically. Some diseases can be cured while others cannot. It depends on the type and stage-development of the particular disease. Correct diagnosis is what matters.

Diagnosis refers to an attempt to identify a certain disorder or disease in a particular organism up to the point when a doctor can give a recommendation for a solution to the issue. It can also be termed as an attempt to classify a certain person's condition into distinct categories. This can clarify the process of making medical decisions about the treatment needed to solve a particular malady.

It is essential for a correct diagnosis to be done to determine the correct treatment for a patient. A diagnosis may include blood tests, body tissue tests, x-rays, CT scans or even an explanation of how the patient feels. However, diagnosis may not help the patient as the condition may have developed to an extent that it cannot be treated. Diagnosis is meant to help people, but at other times, it may cause more harm than good.

The x-ray machine, invented by Thomas Edison in 1895, sometimes induces more harm than the condition itself causes. The x-ray machine uses electromagnetic radiation called Rontgen radiation. These radiations have photons which penetrate solids enabling us to see the inside of a body. Other than being used in airport security systems and in crystal structure determination, they are also used on people.

They help doctors and health professionals see inside a person's body without having to cut through tissue. They are mainly used to check for bone-breakage

when accidents happen. They are also employed to view other bodily organs to check for brain tumors by way of CT scans.

Despite their many uses, they also cause tissue damage. Constant use of an x-ray machine can create many types of cancers like bone marrow cancer. From research done by Andreas Mortiz (2007), most of the people suffering from thyroid cancers had too many x-ray scans when they were young. Mortiz found that children who are exposed to x-rays while in their mother's uterus have increased chances of all cancers, tumors and leukemia.

She later did tests that showed x-ray use on the lower abdomen region may lead to the risk of developing a genetic disease that may be passed on to future generations. It has been shown that about 4000 deaths a year are caused by x-ray related diseases in the UK. Mortiz (2007) also points out that, "Unless it is for a real emergency situation, x-rays should be avoided as far as possible because their harmful side-effects may pose a greater health risk than the original problem. As patients, you have the right to refuse an x-ray diagnosis. By discussing your specific health problem with your physician, you can find out whether exposure to x-rays is really necessary or not."

Diagnosis is not always a harmful process, though. Some of the tests done actually aid in identifying the ailment and the treatment needed. In cases like breast cancer, the tests done may lead to its early detection. If a patient's doctor suspects that they may have cancer based on specific symptoms, diagnostic tests are in order. It is from these diagnostic tests that a doctor learns whether breast cancer, for example, is present and how much of it has spread throughout the body.

From this point, treatment can begin depending on degree of harm. In less extreme cases, surgery will be done to remove the cancerous cells and some drugs are administered to the patient. In extreme cases, when cancer has spread to a much greater extent, a number of treatments can be done depending on the patient. According to Dr. Reshma (2010), treatments like chemotherapy, radiotherapy, hormone therapy and blood transfusions are used to treat the cancer.

Diagnosis is key in cases where it can be used to curb the spread of an epidemic or a pandemic. Tests are performed on people living in a certain location and its surroundings to determine the spread of an ailment. Once the results are out, treatments and quarantine measures are taken if the disease is viral.

Death is an inevitable part of our lives. We all have the hope that one day, when our time comes, we will die peacefully. The majority of individuals in our society have the fear of being sick from an ailment, suffering and eventually dying. That is why we have doctors to help us know what we are suffering from. But for us as patients, we must make it our duty and responsibility to know what kind of tests are being done on us. We should not automatically agree to all the tests our doctors approve. Some tests may actually do more harm than good. In cases where there is no alternative, extreme caution must be used.

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